

General feedback noted by NTFS Reviewers in 2025

Some general themes emerged in the feedback received from all reviewers across the 2025 NTFS nominations and a summary of 'general areas of strength' and 'general areas for development' is provided below.

Please note that not all these points will apply to all nominees, given the unique practice of each NTFS nominee. Nominees and TEALs are encouraged to take this information as supplementary to the *2026 Guidance for Institutions and Individuals* (to be published Mon 6 October 2025), which should be the main source of information for those developing claims.

General areas of strength:

Impact and Reach

Many nominees demonstrated significant influence within their institutions and beyond, with evidence of transformative effects on student learning, curriculum design, and educational practices. This includes impactful teaching strategies and collaborations that extend beyond their immediate role. In the strongest claims, outcomes deriving from this work were clearly linked to the practice of the nominee.

Pedagogical Focus and Student Development

Nominees showed strong alignment between their teaching philosophies and practices, enhancing student learning and outcomes. Notable themes across the 2025 nominations included the integration of digital technologies, community-focused initiatives and student-driven educational activities, among others. There was also a clear commitment to addressing educational inequalities and fostering inclusive learning environments present in many 2025 claims.

Influence, Professional Development, and Mentorship

Many nominees presented evidence of sustained influence at their institution and beyond, driving strategic initiatives that improve teaching and learning. Nominees showed that they contributed to the professional growth of colleagues and fostered a culture of continuous professional development.

Reflection and Continuous Development

Reflective practice was a key theme in 2025, with strong applicants demonstrating a commitment to both continuous professional growth through CPD and the ongoing monitoring of the outcomes of their activities to ensure effectiveness.

General areas for development:

Evidence of Impact

- Reviewers in 2025 frequently identified the need for nominees to provide strong evidence of impact - both qualitative and quantitative - to support the claims made.

This feedback was particularly offered in relation to evidence of the transformation of student learning submitted against Criterion 1.

- While many applications described activities in detail, some might have more clearly connected these to specific outcomes - such as transformation in student learning demonstrated through testimonials or metrics like attainment rates, retention, or feedback (though this is not an exhaustive list). See the *2026 Institutional Guidance* (to be published on Mon 6 Oct 2025) for more example evidence types.
- Reviewers encourage nominees to ensure their claims present a balanced range of evidence, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, where appropriate, to illustrate the reach and effect of their work.
- Where external accolades are cited (for example, awards or professional recognition), nominees should clearly relate these to their HE-level teaching and learning practice.
- Reviewers ask that nominees ensure they clarify the remit of their substantive role, so that reviewers can accurately determine activities which evidence impacts outside of this.

Developing Responses to Criterion 3

Reviewers identified nominee responses to Criterion 3 as a particular area for development. They suggested nominees consider:

- How to best develop reflective accounts that critically examine both achievements and challenges.
- Demonstrating how teaching and leadership have evolved over time to convey their journey of professional growth and commitment to continuous development.
- How best to evidence strong links between CPD activities and tangible improvements in practice.

Structural and Stylistic Considerations

- Stronger nominations tend to provide well-balanced and clearly aligned evidence across all three criteria, which enhances the overall strength of the claim.
- Narrative approaches that go beyond bullet-pointed lists are often more effective, helping reviewers follow the story of the work and evaluate its impact.
- Nominations are often most compelling when they highlight a smaller number of activities in depth, offering rich evidence that clearly demonstrates excellence.

General feedback noted by CATE Reviewers in 2025

Some general themes emerged in the feedback received from all reviewers across the 2025 CATE nominations and a summary of 'general areas of strength' and 'general areas for development' are provided below.

Please note that not all these points will apply to all teams, given the unique practice of each nominated CATE Team. Team members and TEALs are encouraged to take this information as supplementary to the *2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams* (to be published Mon 6 October 2025), which should be the main source of information for those developing claims.

General areas of strength:

Effective Team Working and Leadership:

- In many strong claims, the team demonstrates strong evidence of effective collaboration, with diverse expertise contributing to shared goals. Leadership is inclusive, with team members contributing beyond their core responsibilities.
- The collaboration has led to demonstrable improvements in key student success metrics, such as pass rates, completion rates, career development, etc. and overall positive outcomes for team members.
- The team has successfully integrated academics, technicians, students, and community partners, working across traditional hierarchical boundaries and promoting a culture of inclusivity.

Impact and Reach:

- The outcomes of the collaborative work presented have had significant impact both within the institution and beyond (if relevant), with evidence of positive changes in areas such as student engagement, wellbeing, retention and academic success (not an exhaustive list).
- Collaborative team initiatives being recognised and adopted by other institutions, both nationally and internationally (if relevant), showcasing the far-reaching value of the work.
- The impact of the collaboration on the local community is specifically highlighted (if relevant), reflecting the broader societal benefits of the team collaboration.

Reflective Practices:

- The team is committed to continuous improvement, using reflective processes to ensure alignment with their collaborative goals. This reflective practice helps to refine and develop the team's activities over time.

- There is a clear narrative about the team's evolution, including proactive engagement with external stakeholders (where relevant), and mentoring initiatives that support professional growth for team members.
- The team's ethos is rooted in collaboration, with mutual support and co-delivery evident in their partnerships. The positive outcomes of their work are clearly contingent on the success of that collaboration.

Innovation and Inclusivity:

- The team's initiatives might challenge traditional academic and organisational hierarchies, empowering student voices and giving them a genuine role in decision-making processes.
- The team places a strong emphasis on increasing diverse representation in leadership and decision-making roles, which helps to create more inclusive and equitable structures within their collaborative activities.

Evidence of Reflection and Engagement:

- There is strong evidence that teams are responsive to student feedback, with a focus on listening to learners and using that input to refine and improve the learning experience.
- The team provide evidence of initiatives that prioritise student well-being and engagement, and address issues around equity.

General areas for development:

Where reviewers identified areas for development in the 2025 CATE nominations, the following themes emerged from their feedback:

Evidence of Deep Collaboration:

- Nominations are stronger when they include clear detail on how individual team members contribute to the collaborative process, helping reviewers fully understand how the team functions together.
- The strongest claims not only describe outcomes and actions but also clearly show how the team collaborated to achieve them, which provides especially robust evidence for Criterion 1.
- The team's collaboration is best described in detail in a way that captures how collaboration is practically enacted. Explaining specific collaborative mechanisms is beneficial.
- Some claims would be strengthened by providing more detailed evidence of student involvement, showing how students actively contribute to decision-making and co-designing initiatives.
- Nominations are strongest when they make explicit the link between collaborative efforts and resulting impact, clearly showing how collaboration leads to outcomes. This is especially valuable for Criterion 2, which focuses on the impact of the team's collaboration.

- The strongest claims gave detailed explanation of each team member's role, particularly how their specific contributions support the collective success of the team's collaborative work.

Measuring Impact and Long-term Effectiveness:

- Claims are most compelling when evidence of positive outcomes is accompanied by clear evidence on student participation, achievement, and progression, supported by both quantitative and qualitative insights (as relevant).
- Strong nominations often demonstrate systematic processes for measuring and tracking the impact of collaborative work, providing reviewers with a full picture of effectiveness.

Coherence:

- Submissions are strongest when evidence is clearly integrated into a cohesive narrative, enabling reviewers to follow the argument with ease.
- Concise, well-chosen bullet points can enhance a clear narrative and are most effective when used selectively.